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EVALUATION REPORT ON THE TRAINFORTRADE PROGRAMME

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Introduction

1. It was decided at the twenty-sixth session of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget that an evaluation of the TRAINFORTRADE Programme should be conducted by an independent consultant acting under the methodological guidance of the Programme, Planning and Assessment Unit (PPAU).

2. The purpose of this study, conducted from June to September 1997, is to assess the relevance of the TRAINFORTRADE concept and the scope of the Programme, taking into account the resources made available to it, to analyse the relationship between TRAINFORTRADE and other related programmes, to evaluate its sustainability and to make recommendations on the basis of the experience gained since it was launched.

3. The methodology adopted, in agreement with PPAU, is outlined in annex I. The detailed terms of reference are contained in annex II.

I. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME

4. The objective of TRAINFORTRADE, which was created in 1990, is to develop the human resources of developing countries in the field of international trade. To this end, the Programme has undertaken projects which received 23 separate financial contributions totalling $7,258,000, or approximately $1,000,000 per year, between 1990 and 1996. This represents about 5 per cent of all the funding received by UNCTAD for technical cooperation over the period as a whole. The funds obtained were in excess of $1,000,000 in 1991, 1992 and 1995. They totalled $572,000 in 1996 and should exceed $1,500,000 in 1997.

5. Eighty-six per cent of these funds come from four sources: the European Union (39 per cent), Luxembourg (21 per cent), France (14 per cent) and UNDP (12 per cent). They were used for interregional projects (41 per cent), regional or subregional projects (55 per cent: Africa; Asia/Pacific; Caribbean; Central America; Arab countries) and, to a very much lesser extent, for national projects (4 per cent: Philippines; Romania).

6. The participation of women in the various projects remained steady at around 20 per cent in course development activities and 30 per cent in the training of trainers, while for direct training it varied significantly from one country to another, averaging about 20 per cent overall.

7. The least developed countries are well represented among the countries served by TRAINFORTRADE programmes, particularly those on the African continent. In all, 25 per cent of the least developed countries benefited from TRAINFORTRADE activities in one form or another, a large proportion of them being very heavily indebted countries.

8. The activities undertaken were of five kinds: the production of training material; the training of trainers; direct training; the development of an international network; and the preparation of diploma courses.

A. Training material

9. Training packages have been developed in the following areas:

- Trade with European Union Single Market countries;
- International commercial diplomacy (the new multilateral framework);
- Trade and environment;
- Commodity trading: futures and options markets;
- Commodity trading: physical markets;
- Competition policy and restrictive business practices;
- Trade efficiency;
- Marine insurance and risk management.

10. In addition to these documents, there are several training guides (for the training of course developers, for the training of managers and for the training of trainers). Thus, eight training packages have been produced on various aspects of trade policy, international trade operations and transport, as well as four documents on training methodology. These documents have been translated into a number of languages, adapted to specific national or regional contexts and updated.

B. Training of trainers

11. This heading includes course development as well as training of trainers. In all, nearly 200 persons have benefited from one or more of these activities.

C. Direct training

12. Consolidation of the statistics contained in the various progress reports on the Programme reveals that approximately 2,000 persons took part in seminars or workshops between 1992 and April 1997. This figure should probably be revised upwards given that some activities may have been organized directly by the regional or national centres without the Programme's central office being notified.

D. International deployment

13. The TRAINFORTRADE management has endeavoured since the inception of the Programme to set up a network of national and regional centres in the developing countries and also to add centres of excellence in the industrialized countries to the network. The Programme's activities may be summarized briefly as follows.

14. **Regional and national centres.** Activities took place in Central America, Asia and the Pacific, the Caribbean and Africa, including the Maghreb countries.

TRAINFORTRADE/Central America

15. Funding for this project was provided from the outset by the Commission of the European Communities. A centre was established in San José, Costa Rica, in 1991, with the participation of various governmental and private entities and the University of Costa Rica. A regional expert, a regional coordinator and five national coordinators were appointed. Another centre was also set up in 1993 in San Salvador at the University of Central America, which will work together with the national chamber of commerce. A study analysing Costa Rica's needs was undertaken as soon as the centre was established to serve as a model for similar studies to be made from 1994 onwards by each of the five national coordinators. Activities to adapt TRAINFORTRADE courses and deliver training began in 1992. Two institutions associated with the project in Costa Rica experienced difficulties and were unable to meet their financial commitments. The initial project was revised in 1994 to concentrate on the delivery of existing courses. The project was evaluated in 1995.

TRAINFORTRADE/South-East Asia and the Pacific region

16. A project covering eight countries of South-East Asia has been financed since 1992 by Luxembourg. It is planned, in a second stage, to include some Pacific island States in the project. A centre was established in 1992 in Kuala Lumpur with the participation of Malaysia's chamber of commerce and industry, Utara University, the National Trade Facilitation Resource Centre and the Malaysian Insurance Institute. An expert was sent to Kuala Lumpur for a two-year period to develop and supervise this centre. Various activities involving the training of trainers and delivery of courses took place in 1993/94.

17. In the Pacific region a project was set up in 1995 with the University of the South Pacific. A needs analysis was made in May-June of the same year and a local adviser was engaged in November. Training and dissemination activities were conducted from March 1996 onwards. This project was evaluated in 1996.

TRAINFORTRADE/Maghreb

18. Preparatory work for the launching of a centre began in 1992 and a regional expert was engaged in 1993. Several institutions were designated as regional or national centres: in Algeria, the "Institut supérieur de gestion et de planification" and the "Ecole supérieure d'administration et de gestion"; and, in Tunisia, the "Institut supérieur de gestion", the "Ecole supérieure de commerce", the "Institut des hautes écoles commerciales" and the economic sciences faculty of the University of Tunis. An expert was sent to Tunis for a two-year period. Trainer training and direct training activities were conducted from 1994 to 1996.

TRAINFORTRADE/Caribbean

19. A project was approved in 1994 to develop a regional training capability with the participation of Sir Arthur Lewis Community College. A training needs analysis and the upgrading of various training courses figure among the activities planned. Courses of training and dissemination were delivered as from 1994. The needs analysis was made that same year by two local experts following the TRAINFORTRADE approach. Another training project was initiated for the francophone islands as of 1994 in cooperation with an institute of Fort de France and the "Université des Antilles et de la Guyane".

TRAINFORTRADE/Africa

20. Various training activities have taken place in francophone and lusophone countries, as well as in southern Africa, since 1994. Several institutions (universities and public or private bodies) have been involved in the implementation of training programmes. An institution at Dakar was designated as the regional centre for West Africa.

21. **Centres of excellence.** Since its inception, TRAINFORTRADE has repeatedly endeavoured to bring various institutions in Europe and North America into the network. To date, only one institution has made such a commitment by preparing a training package on the management of trade information.

E. Diploma courses

22. TRAINFORTRADE has also considered establishing one or more diplomas to be awarded to participants who have completed its courses (direct training or training of trainers). This project has not yet materialized.

II. EVALUATION

23. Although operational for seven years, TRAINFORTRADE has not yet been the subject of an external evaluation. Two specific TRAINFORTRADE projects, one in Central America and the other in the Pacific, have been evaluated. It is worth recalling the main conclusions of these reports. The first report notes the institutional, administrative, financial and coordination difficulties encountered by the project, which were judged to be surmountable, and also refers to the necessity in future of emphasizing better evaluation of training needs. The second project, covering a period of 30 months and beginning in February 1995, was evaluated 20 months later. The evaluation concluded that the objectives set could not be achieved by the target dates. In particular, the number of course developers, trainers, training packages and practitioners trained would be very limited, or even nil in some cases. The difficulties encountered are chiefly attributable to:

(1) An inaccurate evaluation of training capabilities in the region, even though two consultants had been engaged to define training needs and capacity;

(2) Shortcomings in project implementation, as regards both the skills required in the field and the management of the project in Geneva.

24. The report concludes that the project is unlikely to be completed and recommends setting more modest goals in future, such as launching a limited number of courses. Although the interest generated by the project among the parties concerned in the field is very high, the report's overall conclusion is that the project is a long way from being a success, largely because it was too ambitious and not adequately managed.

A. Concept and design

25. Since 1992 UNCTAD has placed emphasis in its official declarations on the need to promote human resources development. The TRAINFORTRADE initiative fits perfectly within that approach. UNCTAD, in the spirit of Cartagena and Midrand, opted to take measures focusing on the process of globalization of the economy, for the benefit of developing countries. Those measures include developing training capabilities in the field of international trade. Here, too, TRAINFORTRADE is an entirely appropriate tool for realizing these aspirations. Conceived as early as 1989, TRAINFORTRADE might almost be described as visionary, considering how far it concords with the objectives officially formulated later on by UNCTAD.

26. The concept itself is well articulated. It seeks to emphasize support for existing high-level institutions in developing countries, in areas where UNCTAD has a comparative advantage. This ambitious programme envisages the creation of an international network in which expertise would be exchanged in both a North-North and a South-South direction. Thus, the success of the project will ultimately depend not on the legitimacy of the concept, which is acknowledged, but on the effectiveness of its implementation.

27. Effective implementation depends, in turn, on the combination of a number of conditions, in particular: UNCTAD's comparative advantage in the field of technical cooperation; the receptivity of the donor and beneficiary countries; the choice of training institutions, both in developing and in industrialized countries; and the capacity of the central team in Geneva to manage the projects effectively.

B. UNCTAD's comparative advantage and conditions for its realization

28. The object here is not to make a new detailed inventory of the areas in which UNCTAD has a comparative advantage but rather to discuss those which were singled out by both donors and beneficiaries during the meetings held in Geneva and in the countries visited.

29. The first area of comparative advantage mentioned frequently relates to the fact that UNCTAD is definitely identified as the friendly multilateral institution par excellence for the developing countries, having the incontestable mission of promoting their interests in international trade. The second relates to its analytical capability. UNCTAD is well known in particular for its work on commodities, trade efficiency, shipping, the analysis of economic development policies in general and the interpretation of the new commercial order following upon the conclusion of the Uruguay Round.

30. When asked about UNCTAD's potential competitors, the respondents have considerable difficulty in naming other institutions, the International Trade

Centre (UNCTAD/WTO) nevertheless being referred to most often. However, it should be noted that, for the respondents, UNCTAD's distinctive expertise does not seem to lie in training as such, although the various UNCTAD training programmes are sometimes cited as evidence of its capability in this field.

31. **Receptivity of the donor countries.** Donors were quickly won over to the TRAINFORTRADE approach. They were convinced of its value for developing countries, especially as for most of them this Programme was in keeping with the spirit of the new situation resulting from the phenomenon of globalization. Substantial and repeated financial contributions soon followed, at least in the early years.

32. The meetings held with a number of donors (accounting for 64 per cent of the funds received) give an indication of the evolution of their attitudes towards the Programme. The TRAINFORTRADE concept continues, on the whole, to enjoy their support. However, the Programme's uneven performance is now leading to certain reservations that raise questions about the prospects of funding from several of them.

33. **Receptivity of the beneficiary countries.** These countries are keen to go on benefiting in future from the Programme, since it responds to their needs and expectations. They see the necessity of integrating into world trade and recognize their deficiencies in training for international trade. The needs are considerable and, even if modest in comparison, the services offered by TRAINFORTRADE are very much appreciated.

34. That said, the Programme nevertheless causes some misgivings. While the concept and the content seem adequate, the actual performance leaves some unsatisfied. Criticism is directed at the management of the Programme (transparency, communication, protocol, follow-up) and the lack of continuity in the activities undertaken.

35. **The choice of institutions.** The various documents issued by the Programme's managers emphasize the importance of a suitable choice of host institutions in the developing countries. These are meant to be high-level institutions for which TRAINFORTRADE will provide the training packages and know-how needed to enable them to contribute in a substantial and durable fashion to human resources development in their own country or region, and possibly as part of the international network that TRAINFORTRADE aims to establish.

36. It turns out, however, that in all too many cases the institutions selected by TRAINFORTRADE in developing countries, and particularly those designated to coordinate activities, cannot be regarded as high-level institutions. The question arises as to why this should be so. One reason would seem to be the shortage of high-level institutions in some developing countries. Another might be that well-established and renowned institutions are very demanding and what TRAINFORTRADE is proposing does not satisfy them, at least in financial terms.

37. The difficulty of finding high-quality partners is even more apparent when it comes to extending the network in the industrialized countries and establishing centres of excellence capable of contributing to the development

new training packages or new educational approaches. The TRAINFORTRADE progress reports provide evidence, year after year, of the efforts made to enlist new partners both in Europe and in North America. The difficulties encountered in this area would suggest that what TRAINFORTRADE has to offer is not enough to attract the most highly renowned institutions. Lastly, there is the fear that an unrigorous selection process might be driving away potential high-level partners unwilling to be associated with institutions of lesser repute.

38. **Capacity of the central team.** At present, the TRAINFORTRADE team in Geneva has only two posts, one of them financed very recently from support costs (the Programme had previously been financed by the projects themselves). Even if in the past the Programme was able to count upon collaborators financed and supplied by certain donors, the situation of the Programme has always been rather precarious. This may be explained by UNCTAD's policy of making new programmes prove their worth before regular budget funding is provided. However, it must certainly be concluded that the Programme has not been provided with enough human resources to manage all of its projects under favourable conditions, bearing in mind the objectives it has set itself.

39. Management functions include promoting the Programme among donors and beneficiaries, as well as within UNCTAD, elaborating projects, negotiating them with all the parties concerned and administering them. In addition to these responsibilities, the Programme Coordinator also participates in training activities. It is not surprising, therefore, that criticisms were made at the meetings held with representatives of beneficiary and donor countries: information was not being passed on in a satisfactory manner (or through the required official channels) and project follow-up left much to be desired.

C. Production of training material

40. The inventory of the Programme's achievements enumerated above is quite satisfactory in quantitative terms. The beneficiaries describe the material as being of good quality, occasionally needing to be adapted to specific national or regional requirements. If there is any criticism, it comes from experts questioning the validity of specific aspects of the training packages rather than from the trainers or participants in the seminars, who - in the experts' view - are not sufficiently qualified to make a full evaluation of the quality of the content. TRAINFORTRADE has made considerable efforts to revise training materials whose technical complexity and jargon made them inaccessible to a majority of users.

41. The users acknowledge that UNCTAD provides them with certain information and training packages that can be found almost nowhere else. This contribution by UNCTAD to the sharing and advancement of knowledge in the field of international trade and of the developing countries is finally very much appreciated by the latter.

42. TRAINFORTRADE's efforts to promote use of the training material by electronic means should also be emphasized. The results are still modest but

not negligible. About 30 to 40 per cent of the material is now available on diskette. TRAINFORTRADE is in a position to adapt itself to the requirements of the age of training with the help of electronic media.

43. Since analysis constitutes one of UNCTAD's basic missions, the prospects of new training initiatives which may result therefrom are numerous. According to various estimates, activities related to training and the dissemination of information produced by UNCTAD already account for 10 to 20 per cent of expenditures on technical cooperation. The potential for producing training material per se could be substantially increased.

44. It should be noted, however, that TRAINFORTRADE has thus far not benefited fully from the pool of in-house expertise. It is a paradox that the participation of UNCTAD experts in the elaboration of the Programme's training packages should have remained very modest, at between 10 and 30 per cent by some accounts.

45. Examining the impact of TRAINFORTRADE with reference only to the written and electronic media would not do justice to the Programme's activities in the field of training as a whole. The training is based on an original and effective methodology, ranging from training in course development through the training of trainers to direct training. The implicit "turnkey" concept, focusing on interactivity and the sharing of North-South and South-South experiences and expertise, is an approach that is meeting with undeniable success.

D. Relationship of the Programme with other entities

46. **Within UNCTAD.** TRAINFORTRADE has naturally built up close links with most UNCTAD divisions, if only because they have at one time or another been suppliers of expertise for TRAINFORTRADE activities or, conversely, users of its services (the trade points, for example).

47. It should nevertheless be emphasized that the place of the Programme within the organization has to date been somewhat ambiguous. For the first six years of its existence, TRAINFORTRADE came directly under the UNCTAD management. It moved a year ago into one division and then, barely a few months ago, into another, in conformity with the Midrand Declaration. It is in this latter division that its potential may best be confirmed, since the division concerned already has other programmes with a strong training component, as well as a unit consisting of several specialists in the field of training.

48. Another factor also to be borne in mind is that training activities are undertaken in all divisions, independently of those conducted by TRAINFORTRADE, including on topics covered by this Programme. There is, then, at least some measure of competition involving experts in training activities within the divisions or those managed by TRAINFORTRADE.

49. **Outside UNCTAD.** The relations between UNCTAD and other organizations are very numerous and varied, as witnessed by a particularly exhaustive

inventory it made recently. That evaluation was not intended to analyse those relationships in detail. However, since this study is concerned with training in the field of international trade, it will be necessary to look more closely at the relationship between TRAINFORTRADE and the International Trade Centre (ITC), where importance has traditionally been attached to training activities.

50. In principle, the two institutions' fields of activity are different: UNCTAD provides assistance in the formulation of trade policy, and ITC in the promotion of international trade. In practice, however, a hard and fast distinction between trade policy and trade promotion is difficult to maintain.

51. For some, the duplication of activities in UNCTAD and ITC would not be justified, given that the objectives pursued and the audiences targeted are not the same and that a topic cannot therefore be presented advantageously in an identical manner by the two institutions. This argument has a certain validity, although it is nevertheless limited, since a comparison of the documents produced by the two institutions on the same subject reveals such similarities in the content that it has to be concluded that some basic elements connected with the regulations, practices or institutions may call for an at least partly "standardized" presentation.

52. For the evaluator, however, the duplication of certain efforts in the field of training derives more from historical and contextual causes than from the uncertain dividing line between trade policy and trade promotion. In both cases, training activities have become considerably more diversified since the beginning of this decade due to a veritable explosion in the demand for training resulting from the globalization of the economy. It was inevitable that the two institutions should have engaged in similar fields of training. Only close cooperation in practice could have encouraged more distinct and more complementary forms of specialization. In this regard, consultations beginning with an exercise to identify the internal resources of each partner, such as those which took place recently between UNCTAD and ITC, are very positive initiatives worth undertaking more widely in future.

53. Another factor which also contributes to a certain overlapping of roles is the population targeted by training activities. In the two cases mentioned, these audiences are very diversified. They include trade policy makers, representatives of public or private intermediary bodies as well as international trade practitioners. In both cases, moreover, while emphasis is placed on the training of trainers and the development of training capacity, a large part of the efforts is in fact aimed at direct training. This multiplicity of targets can only result, therefore, in a certain similarity of training approaches.

54. Must drastic measures therefore be taken to ensure that the roles are differentiated in future? For the time being, certainly not. It would not be beneficial either for the institutions concerned or for the donors and beneficiaries to impose territorial limits in the field of training, especially as successes are not always scored in the institutions from which one would expect them to come. As pointed out above, serious efforts have been made in the last few years, and even months, to achieve better coordination and cooperation between the two institutions. That is the way to

proceed, first of all at the highest levels, with the senior officials being entrusted to issue guidelines for their respective organizations aimed at ensuring a greater harmonization of training activities.

55. Certain fields of cooperation deserve from the outset to be given precedence, in particular the following:

(1) Analysis of training needs and delivery capability, performed on a national or regional basis, another area in which some initiatives have already been taken and deserve to be applied more generally;

(2) Themes and topics of training, where greater attention should obviously be given by both sides to work on international diplomacy, trade and the environment, and risk management;

(3) Training methods, where the two institutions should endeavour to share their experiences better since they face the same challenges, notably with regard to methodology for the training of trainers and case method, multimedia and distance learning.

E. Sustainability

56. One of the principal objectives of TRAINFORTRADE is to strengthen, in a durable manner, the institutions selected in the developing countries. In this regard, the record is altogether very modest. These institutions have evidently not become the focal points in their respective countries or regions, as called for in the Programme. Nonetheless, in almost all cases, TRAINFORTRADE's activities generated great interest and achieved a certain measure of success. Once the projects come to an end, however, the training activities are abandoned or reduced considerably, the trainers trained under the Programme disperse and the dissemination of information from Geneva virtually ceases.

57. To what is this attributable? There are three main reasons. The first relates to the selection of these institutions at the very beginning of the projects. Although the Programme prides itself in making a rigorous evaluation of needs and capabilities at the design stage, it seems that the choice of partner institutions is subject to a certain opportunism and that the partners chosen do not always meet the requirements of competence, reputation, potential for development, motivation, etc.

58. Secondly, the low level of resources provided is not adequate to meet the very ambitious objectives that the Programme sets itself. Most projects have rather modest funding (typically $400,000 spread over three years). Overall, the proportion of UNCTAD's budget expenditures outside Geneva on technical cooperation is around 40 per cent (according to the UNCTAD management). The funds made available directly to the institutions are thus generally speaking very small and of short duration. It is not surprising, therefore, that the results in terms of strengthening the host institutions are limited.

59. Lastly, it should be recalled that such projects require considerable attention from the coordinating unit in Geneva to ensure their management and follow-up. The resources available to TRAINFORTRADE have been clearly insufficient in relation to the declared objectives.

F. Development of an international network

60. The documentation produced by TRAINFORTRADE refers to a network coordinated by the central team at Geneva in cooperation with training institutions in South-East Asia, for the Pacific island countries, for the Maghreb countries, for the Caribbean and for sub-Saharan Africa. These regional and national institutions are meant to be joined by another network consisting of centres of excellence charged with contributing to innovation through the production of new training packages and the use of modern computer and telecommunications systems in order ultimately to provide distance learning.

61. Many institutions have in fact benefited from the TRAINFORTRADE Programme since its creation. However, as we have already seen, training becomes much less frequent once the projects come to an end, and the links between the regional and national coordinating institutions have been considerably reduced in all the regions concerned, and remain embryonic in those involved recently in the Programme. The idea of a worldwide network, as referred to in the Programme's documentation, suggests a continuity in the relationship between institutions that is much greater than actually obtains in practice.

62. As to the centres of excellence, only one institution has thus far been approached. The creation of other centres in Europe and North America, announced several years ago, has not yet occurred. The ambiguity of the task which these centres are expected to perform and the modest resources proposed are undoubtedly the main reasons for the lack of enthusiasm shown in such a project.

G. Diploma courses

63. Since 1992 TRAINFORTRADE has envisaged the establishment of several types of diploma (for pre-service, second- and third-level training, as well as for in-service training). The intention was to have the centres of excellence take responsibility for managing these diploma courses. The fact that the network of centres of excellence is still not in place shows clearly that it has not been possible to execute this project.

64. It is to be feared that TRAINFORTRADE has not fully appreciated the complexity of such an endeavour or, indeed, the magnitude of the resources that would be needed to ensure its success. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that the creation of such diploma programmes would generate keen interest in many developing countries.

H. Training of trainers and direct training

65. The estimates quoted above regarding the number of trainers trained by TRAINFORTRADE and the number of participants in the seminars or courses held by those trainers indicate that - in quantitative terms at least - the results are very modest (200 trainers and 2,000 participants in direct training activities over a period of seven years). It therefore has to be concluded that the efforts made by TRAINFORTRADE are insufficient in terms of the

objectives announced in the annual reports and the work plans referred to therein. Some good trainers have nevertheless been trained in many countries and good seminars and courses have been delivered.

I. Overall evaluation

66. Having adopted, almost ahead of its time, an excellent formula responding to real needs, TRAINFORTRADE possessed many assets to achieve an outright success. Seven years later, the record is much more nuanced. To be sure, several quality training packages have been compiled and TRAINFORTRADE has made its mark in many countries and a number of regions. All the same, the results do not match the stated objectives and expectations. TRAINFORTRADE is now suffering from the fact that its credibility has been damaged by the failure to achieve the targets set, by shortcomings in management and follow-up and by an inability to ensure the sustainability of its actions. This syndrome is reflected at times by a certain "donor fatigue" and by worrying slippages. The reputation of the Programme will have to be enhanced through the implementation of appropriate remedial measures.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

67. UNCTAD's official declarations forcefully bear witness to its intention to intensify its efforts to assist developing countries in the field of training for international trade. The TRAINFORTRADE Programme is an original approach and a formula that can perform well provided that it is implemented in the appropriate manner. The previous setbacks do not call these qualities into question. UNCTAD should, therefore, endeavour to take the necessary measures for the future success of TRAINFORTRADE based on more realistic objectives than in the past. This means:

A. Concerning the TRAINFORTRADE strategy

1. **Setting more limited targets.** The Programme is too ambitious, unless considerable resources are allocated to it, which is unlikely in the short to medium term. The scope of the Programme must be reduced by limiting the number of beneficiary countries/regions. The number of training packages administered by TRAINFORTRADE should also be reduced and better reflect UNCTAD's own distinctive expertise. TRAINFORTRADE will therefore first have to examine its various products critically and retain only the best ones. This choice should logically be tailored more closely to the expertise available in the division where it is now located.

2. **Greater utilization of the complementary expertise offered by other institutions.** Particular attention must be paid in this respect to joint actions and sharing of information and know-how in training technology with ITC, one of whose principal missions is to develop human resources in the field of international trade in developing countries.

3. **Stage-by-stage programming of activities.** The plans to create regional centres and centres of excellence should be revised downwards. They should be limited to only a few regional centres

(two or three at most) and one centre of excellence, all of them selected with rigour and for a trial period of three years before other centres are added.

4. **Diploma courses.** It would be preferable to postpone the creation of diplomas with the TRAINFORTRADE label, except in respect of trainers who have attended the centre of excellence chosen for the pilot stage, and of persons who have undergone training at the regional centres.

5. **Emphasis on new training methods.** TRAINFORTRADE's mission is to assist all developing countries, including the most disadvantaged. Resources will always be lacking with such a large mandate. TRAINFORTRADE should therefore accelerate its investment in modern training methods (electronic media, distance learning) to meet this challenge. The Programme has made a favourable start but lacks the means to achieve this alone, and partnerships with appropriate public or private institutions will have to be envisaged for each type and sector of activity. In this regard, as mentioned above, the sharing of experience with ITC should be encouraged.

B. **Concerning the implementation of the strategy**

6. **Strengthening the basis of the Programme within UNCTAD.** Two measures should be considered in this connection. The first is a general one that would be aimed at strengthening the integration of training activities and analytical and information activities within UNCTAD, in the spirit of Midrand, an approach that could only encourage the development of a programme such as TRAINFORTRADE. The second measure relates to the organization of the Programme itself. The objective would be to set up a real programme management team with the coordinator joined ex officio by representatives of the specific UNCTAD divisions involved in the Programme.

7. **Increased resources.** The Programme's setbacks are attributable in part to the lack of resources available to the central team, a shortcoming pointed out on many occasions by donors and beneficiaries alike. Within the limit of the guidelines concerning the allocation of resources, UNCTAD should make sure that a minimum of staff coming under the regular budget are assigned, if only on a part-time basis, to managing the Programme.

8. **More systematic monitoring.** The dysfunctions noted in this report would have been detected sooner and remedial measures could have been taken more quickly if the Programme had been evaluated immediately after the start-up phase (i.e. in 1993 or 1994). It would therefore be advisable to carry out more frequent periodic evaluations in the future.

Annex I

METHODOLOGY

1. The study was conducted in three stages. The consultant first analyzed the relevant documentation of the Programme and meetings were held with UNCTAD staff and representatives of the permanent missions at Geneva (donor and beneficiary countries).

2. To the extent possible, the data on which the analyses in the report are based were taken from official UNCTAD documents or internal documents supplied by the organization's management. All the factual data contained in this report were discussed with the TRAINFORTRADE Programme Coordinator. For reasons of time, the method of data collection envisaged in the terms of reference had to be modified, in agreement with the Programme, Planning and Assessment Unit (PPAU).

3. The second stage consisted of three missions, one of these to one of the major donors and the two others to two countries where TRAINFORTRADE activities had been substantial and where it was possible to constitute a good database on the implementation and follow-up of the projects. For those two countries, information was gathered through focus group meetings involving former coordinators, trainers and representatives of institutes or universities and organizations directly or indirectly responsible for the promotion and facilitation of international trade. Those focus group discussions were preceded and followed by individual interviews with several respondents.

4. During the third stage, meetings were arranged in Geneva to proceed with the validation of the hypotheses generated earlier and to supplement the information gathered.

5. Lastly, the data in the report and its main conclusions were submitted to the principal UNCTAD officers concerned and changes were made where the consultant felt appropriate.

6. The consultant wishes to thank all the people he met for having so readily agreed to answer the questions put to them. He is especially grateful to the staff of the Programme, Planning and Assessment Unit for their most courteous welcome and very effective support in organizing the work and arranging meetings, as well as in collecting documents and information.

7. The consultant also wishes to emphasize that he alone is responsible for the conclusions and recommendations contained in this report and that they were made in an entirely independent manner.

Annex II

TERMS OF REFERENCE

In-depth Study on UNCTAD's TRAINFORTRADE Programme

I. Background

1. TRAINFORTRADE is a technical assistance programme whose main objective is to develop human resources of developing countries in foreign trade and trade-related services. The programme is based on the rationale that (a) training is more efficient if it takes place at the national and/or subregional level; and (b) cooperation among countries and sharing of training resources among training institutions reduces the cost of training and maintains high-quality international standards. The programme focuses on: (i) the strengthening of existing qualified training institutions; (ii) the design and production of high-quality training packages; (iii) the training of trainers; and (iv) the development of a network of cooperation among training institutions for the exchange of information, training materials and trainers.

2. The TRAINFORTRADE Programme started in 1990 with a pilot phase focusing on the development of training packages, the delivery of courses, the training of trainers and the launching of a world-wide network of training institutions in developing countries or regions. The Programme has been financed almost exclusively thrqugh extra-budgetary resources, bilateral as well as multilateral. The training packages that have been developed cover areas such as commodity trade, trade and competition policies, development of the service sector, trade efficiency, and export promotion in cooperation with the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO. Although no formal criteria and mechanism have been established for formal membership, a TRAINFORTRADE Network has been created with members from both developed and developing countries.

II. Purpose and scope of the study

3. The current study is undertaken in accordance with the decision made at the twenty-fourth session of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget calling for an *"in-depth study"* of one particular technical cooperation programme *"which will allow the Working Party to better evaluate the programme, recommend follow-up action and enhance UNCTAD's comparative advantage"*. At its twenty-sixth session, the Working Party selected the TRAINFORTRADE Programme for such a study.

4. The study will be a *thematic* one, focusing on the examination of the Programme in terms of its relevance, effectiveness, impact or potential impact, since the Programme was launched only a few years ago, in the context of its principal objectives.

III. Issues to be covered

5. The in-depth study should:

(1) Consider whether the programme concept and design are appropriate in achieving its overall objectives; in this context, briefly review UNCTAD's comparative advantage in this area; and identify the factors which may have impeded or facilitated the achievement of these objectives;

(2) Study the results and the (potential) impact of the Programme, taking into consideration the views of beneficiaries, donors and partner institutions; review the quality of the material produced within the framework of the Programme;

(3) Record any significant lessons that can be drawn from the experience of the projects and their results, paying particular attention to the potential impact on institution-building at both the country and the subregional levels;

(4) Examine the relationship between this programme and other related programmes (within UNCTAD and elsewhere, such as ITC) with a view to outlining the desirable contours of the Programme and creating synergies;

(5) Assess the present capacity of the team in delivering the Programme; examine the Programme's sustainability in terms of the resources available to it;

(6) Be forward-looking, and on the basis of the experience of the projects and of the lessons learned, make recommendations including estimates of resource requirements, the interface between other UNCTAD programmes and TRAINFORTRADE and their contribution to TRAINFORTRADE, and institutional adjustments with a view to further enhancing UNCTAD's comparative advantage in human resources development in foreign trade and trade-related services.

IV. Evaluation team and reporting

6. The in-depth study will be conducted by an independent consultant under the methodological guidance of the Programme, Planning and Assessment Unit. The study will draw on findings from evaluations conducted on specific TRAINFORTRADE projects. The consultant, in consultation with PPAU, will design a questionnaire to be sent to selected, representative, TRAINFORTRADE centres in order to receive additional qualitative and quantitative information. Field missions will be undertaken as appropriate.

7. The exercise will be undertaken over the period from mid-June to mid-September 1997, corresponding to six weeks of full-time work. The report should be within the space limit of a normal UNCTAD document (not more than 16 single-spaced pages), together with an annex providing supplementary information.

8. The consultant's report will be presented to the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and Programme Budget. PPAU will coordinate and present to the Working Party any comments that the UNCTAD secretariat would like to make on the report.